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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly describes an assignment designed to improve teachers' attitudes toward technology through basic instruction. A group of teachers who were taking graduate level courses were introduced to computer technology in a non-threatening manner starting with learning the basic computer skills, such as e-mail, word processing, and conducting an Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) search. A field trip to the university library was scheduled in the early weeks of the semester to familiarize the teachers with the resources that could be accessed through the library. A demonstration of an ERIC search was also given by one of the reference librarians. Another goal was to help teachers develop a working knowledge of finding resources on the World Wide Web, as well as the ability to critically evaluate the information retrieved. The assignment was accessed from a commercial site on the Web, Blackboard.com, so that teachers would be also introduced to distance learning. A paper copy of the assignment was made available in the library for easy reference, and a step-by-step demonstration on locating and accessing the Web site was given by the instructor. (AEF)

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By Joanne M. Frey

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Teaching Teachers to Use the World Wide Web

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Teacher Attitudes

It is important to come to terms with teachers' attitudes about computers. According to Roblyer & Edwards(2000) educational research hasn't provided the evidence needed to convince teachers of the benefits of using computers in the classroom. Sandholtz,Ringstaff & Dwyer (1997) agree that the effort has been directed toward analysis of students rather than investigation of teachers. Teachers are not convinced that this is not the latest fad in education. This skepticism is well warranted considering the aftermath of several education fads (Cuban, 1984). This trepidation is hindering the progress of both teachers and their students. The situation is confounded by many teachers' fear of computer technology. In some cases, the personal computer revolution missed teachers. Currently, many teachers are put in the unfamiliar role of not knowing as much as their students about using computers. For many this is a difficult transition, after all they are the teacher, they should know how to "do".

Teaching the teachers basic computer skills

In order to reverse this unfortunate situation, a group of teachers who were taking graduate level courses were introduced to computer technology in a non-threatening manner starting with learning the basic computer skills such as e-mail, word processing, and conducting an ERIC search. There were no assumptions about prior teacher experience with computer technology. The course follows International Society of Technology Educators (ISTE), standards which has the students, in this case teachers, master basic skills of computer literacy.

A class field trip to the university library was scheduled in the early weeks of the semester to familiarize the teachers with the resources that can be accessed through

the library. One of the reference librarians conducted an ERIC search demonstration, so teachers can understand this process. For some teachers, this was the first time they have been required to conduct an ERIC search. For other teachers, refinement of skills and new techniques in finding information was emphasized.

Harnessing the power of the World Wide Web

After the teachers master the above mentioned skills, harnessing the power of the World Wide Web was the next step in this educational process. It is imperative that teachers be able to gather information about any topic area in order to actively engage their students with current resources.

It is also important for teachers to be able to find resources that will help them build and expand upon their own ideas or help them generate ideas for their lesson plans. They must also be able to find ready made resources like lesson plans and be able to critique and modify these existing lesson plans for their particular classroom needs. Internet access brings thousands of pieces of information literally to the doorstep of the teacher. According to Inktomi, a search engine company, has noted that the number of web pages has past the billion mark last month (Coates, January 2000). Therefore, it is important to develop a working knowledge about not only how to find resources on the Web but to be able to establish reliability of content as well. The problem is that not all the content on the Web is reliable. Due to the lack of editing to ensure accuracy, any type of content can and is placed on the Web. First, teachers must be able to locate information. Then they must develop the ability to critique and evaluate the information they have gathered from a Web site for content accuracy. In turn, these teachers will teach their students how to evaluate Web sites for content accuracy. This entire activity encourages higher order thinking skills on the part of both teacher and student.

Go to Distance

The assignment was accessed from a commercial distance learning site,

Blackboard.com, on the Web. In this way, teachers were also introduced to distance learning. A paper copy of the assignment was made available in the library for easy reference. A step by step demonstration on locating and accessing the web site was done by the instructor. This online assignment can be described as a scavenger hunt to locate designated web sites. Hopefully this assignment will spark interest in the usefulness of a computer and the World Wide Web.

The added advantage of using the World Wide Web will enable teachers to accumulate current and up to date information available. Teacher attitudes have changed in this course. Teachers do not feel like they were left behind in the current tech gold rush. The starter activities and web site examples will provide scaffolding to facilitate web usage. Using a computer as a tool certainly demystified the technology. This is only the beginning of a technological trend. If teachers understand the basics, it is easier to face a classroom. Gone is the era where teachers have to know everything. I feel much better already.

See attached assignment

References

Coates, J. (2000, January 24). Tech.Buz. Chicago Tribune,Section 4, page 1.

Cuban, L. (1984). How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms 1890-1980. New York:Longman.

Roblyer, M.D., & Edwards, J. (2000). Integrating educational technology into teaching. (2nd ed.) Upper Saddle, New Jersey:Merrill.

Sandholtz, J.H., Ringstaff,C., & Dwyer, D.C. (1997). Teaching with technology:Creating student-centered classrooms. New York: Teachers College Press.

Internet/World Wide Web

For those students who have never "surfed" the World Wide Web, I have required the book *Teaching with the Internet:Lessons from the Classroom* by Donald and Deborah Leu. I have tried to keep costs down for the required texts so I didn't choose *The Teacher's Complete & Easy Guide to the Internet* by Ann Heide and Linda Stilborne. Copies of both these books will be in the **reserve section on the 1st floor of the library.**

For those of you who are comfortable not having instructions in print but via online I have some suggestions:
www.learnthenet.com/english/index.html
or
www.webteacher.org/macexp/indextc.html
or
www.ozline.com/learning/workshop.html

The Learn the Net tutorial helps beginners around the Internet while Web Teacher concentrates on many areas including web building for teachers. Learning the World will help in the categories Surf, Stumble & Lurch and What's on the Web

Your assignment is due the 7th week of the semester.

Find the following:

1. **Illinois Learning Standards** www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/default.html
   Get a copy of the Standards
2. **Chicago Public Schools** www.cps.k12.il.us/
   Copy the Standards
3. **National Council of Teachers of Mathematics** www.nctm.org
   Find out what song by Jimmy Buffett is causing controversy at the NCTM.

4. **CNN-Cable News Network** http://cnn.com/WORLD/Africa/

Or

http://cnn.com/WORLD/Americas/

What is currently happening in the country that your unit is based?
What useful information can you find?
Why is this information useful?
How can you use this site?

5. **National Library of Education** www.ed.gov/NLE/
How could this site help you with your unit?

6. **ERIC lesson plans** www.ericsp.org/lesson.html
Find 5 lesson plans and critique them according to the models presented in class

7. **Find Kathy Schock's site.**
Go to http://school.discovery.com/ and Find the link to Kathy Schock's Site.
Bookmark it or save the address

8. **Find Carrie's Crazy Quilt**
Use a search engine find this site. What is its address?
Could this site help your project?

9. **Whose address is this:** www.neiu.edu/~edudept/

10. **Find 5 new sites (ones not listed here) that will help you with your unit.**
Write the addresses down